

# CULTURE ISSUE

## SPORTS

## Despite strong athletic programs, Middlebury's fan culture falls short

By **BLAISE SIEFER**  
Senior Sports Editor

Since the NESCAC lifted its ban on NCAA play before the 1993–94 season, Middlebury has won 38 National Championships in Division-III. In fact, between 1994 and 2019, there have only been six years where the Panthers haven't won a national championship in at least one sport.

Over the years, Middlebury has cultivated a tradition of athletic dominance across all 31 varsity teams. From men's hockey to women's soccer to men's alpine skiing, Middlebury squads consistently rank in the upper echelon of Division-III athletics. Since 1994, eight different teams have won an NCAA National Championship, while most others have at least clinched NESCAC titles.

But how is Middlebury's athletic excellence celebrated? Are fan sections particularly big? Are they loud and rowdy? And what traditions do fans have, if any?

The answers to those questions aren't simple. In short, there are stark differences in fan support across sports.

It's hard to characterize these

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## Biting into crunchiness culture: MiddKids search for inclusion in the outdoors

By **CHARLOTTE GEHRING & LUCY TOWNEND**  
Staff Writer & Senior Local Editor

MiddKids have long been known for swinging their Nalgene bottles, sporting Patagonia and engaging with the outdoors — all characteristic of what is considered “crunchy.” And while this outdoors- and environment-centric culture permeates campus life, many also find it to be exclusive and inaccessible.

“At Middlebury, there's a lot of people who are really interested in outdoor recreation and the environment, which is labeled

as crunchy on this campus and seems like a large body. Febs often are characterized as crunchy,” Kamryn You Mak '23.5 said.

After taking the past semester off, You Mak described her experience participating in Feb “crunchy” culture.

“It's eye-opening seeing how tight-knit this [Feb] community is, where going on a hike is a typical ‘Feb’ activity,” You Mak said. Many students say that there is a stereotype that Febs are more “crunchy,” given that some choose to spend their Feb-mester traveling, working or participating in programs related to exploring the outdoors.

For others, crunchy culture takes on additional cultural and political significance.

“I think typically activities and traits associated with crunch culture are eating alternative diets, hiking and other outdoor activities, a dedication to reducing one's waste, and wearing brands that claim to be environmentally conscious like Patagonia,” said Elijah Willig '21.

Jackson Hawkins '21.5 agreed. “To me, crunchy culture is rooted in a shared love of the outdoors, but has sort of expanded

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## Mister Up's celebrates 50 years of brews under the bridge

By **MAGGIE REYNOLDS**  
Staff Writer

Tucked away on Bakery Lane, below the Cross Street bridge crossing Otter Creek, is a Middlebury landmark: Mister Up's. Founded in 1970 by Middlebury native Ronald Mainelli, Mister Up's has been a longtime gathering spot for college students and the greater Middlebury community. The restaurant celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

According to current Mister Up's owner and manager Rick Buck, Mainelli named the restaurant after his favorite restaurant in New York City, Mrs. Down's. Mister Up's has had four owners throughout its past 50 years of business, but Buck and his partner have owned the pub since 2012.

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COURTESY OF TOM CROWELL '90

Photo with a Mister Up's ashtray in the 1987 Middlebury yearbook.

## ARTS & CULTURE

# Nocturne arts festival re-animates campus with live music, vibrant exhibitions

By **OWEN MASON-HILL**  
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

For one night a year, Middlebury's lights don't shut off at 8 p.m.; its doors don't close, leaving students without late-night meals or public hangout spots. Instead, each May, when night descends on campus, Middlebury becomes home to a new set of sounds and sights: projec-

tors whirring, arms and legs flowing gracefully in improvisational dance, electric guitars roaring from their amps, neon spotlights casting shadows on the sides of dorms. For one night a year, Nocturne lays claim to campus.

Now, in its fourth-ish iteration — ‘ish’ because last year's festival was canceled — Nocturne's arts festival hosted nearly a hundred proj-

ects spread across campus. Exhibitions ranged from screen printing T-shirts and interpretive dances to films projected against the walls of Painter Hall and Mead Chapel and poems hung from tree limbs. Yet Nocturne's most inventive projects are often its most difficult to describe. Walking around campus, students were greeted by an ocean-scape of crocheted marine life, a bulletin board filled with glow-in-the-dark tacks marking “Places We've Cried on Campus” and a collection of cowboys playing country music beside a fire.

This year, it was the live performances that drew the largest crowds. What felt like well over a hundred students gathered around the Gifford Hall Gampitheatre to hear Will Koch '21 and Jordan Ramos '22.5 blast covers of Jimmy Hendrix and The Beatles, as well as an array of original songs. “I was genuinely so surprised,” Ramos said. “We were still setting up and people I've never seen before were sitting down.”

Equally large crowds formed around performances by student band BevCo and the a cappella group The Bobolinks, as well as the nearby paint-infused dance performance “Making Purple.” The night's

climactic final performance on the Mead Chapel hill also drew an audience; spectators gathered at the



base of the hill to watch red-clad dancers improvise behind the band CrocTears.

The air crackled with an unmistakable intensity, both from the music blaring from the speakers but also from the energy of the audience. “The mood that Nocturne brought to Middlebury was the ultimate light at the end of the tun-

nel,” Ramos said. “There's an appreciation that wasn't there before.” “It's people living, experiencing normalcy and reveling in it,” Jus-

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## NEWS

*Breaking bread: Dining halls lay the foundations for community*

By **SOPHIA MCDERMOTT-HUGHES**

*From Febmester to Snow Bowl graduation, Febs celebrate unique traditions and experiences*

By **LILY JONES**

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*Behind the wheel: Cars shape the Middlebury experience*

By **CHARLIE KEOHANE**

*Midd residents-turned-MiddKids reflect on the view from the middle*

By **GIULIA SHAUGNESSY & IDEAL DOWLING**

*Local Abenaki Chief Don Stevens talks land acknowledgement*

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By **CHARLIE KEOHANE**

*Midd on wheels: Manoeuvring Middlebury's campus*

By **CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL**

*Coffee culture brews strong at Middlebury*

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*After the pandemic, picking up the pieces of Middlebury's traditions*

By **ELIZA KING FREEDMAN**

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*Hookup culture and heteronormativity: Reflections from a gay athlete*

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*Notes from the Desk: A love note to the book that brought me to Middlebury*

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*As a young professional, I am still unlearning Middlebury's culture of overwork*

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*When did you last feel 'alive'?*

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## SPORTS

*The grind never stops: Skateboarding at Middlebury flourishes during pandemic*

By **ABBY SCHNEIDERHAN**